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ABSTRACT

This booklet, 1 of 34 in a series on childhood education prepared by the American Institutes for Research for the 1970 White House Conference on Children, describes the Bilingual Early Childhood Program being carried out in the Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas, where more than half of the population of 670,000 is of Mexican descent. Major characteristics of the program are (1) a high degree of adult-child contact, (2) neatness and order, (3) the use of language as a tool of thought, (4) competitiveness and demands for big achievement, and (5) long-range goals and orientation to the future. The booklet also includes a brief description of specific areas of the program, a source of further information, and a list of locations of other programs. (FJ)

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Model Programs

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Childhood Education

Bilingual Early Childhood Program

San Antonio, Texas

A program designed to meet the language and other needs of Spanish-speaking Mexican-American children ages 3 to 5

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FOREWORD

This booklet is one of 34 in a series of promising programs on childhood education prepared for the White House Conference on Children, December 1970. The series was written under contract by the American Institutes for Research for the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Office of Child Development and the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Within the broad area of childhood education the series includes descriptions of programs on reading and language development, the disadvantaged, preschool education, and special education. In describing a program, each booklet provides details about the purpose; the children reached; specific materials, facilities, and staff involved; and other special features such as community services, parental involvement, and finances. Sources of further information on the programs are also provided.

The Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio, in cooperation with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, is pilot testing a program designed for disadvantaged Mexican-American children aged 3 to 5. Over half of San Antonio's 670,000 population are of Mexican descent. Most have little education, are employed as unskilled laborers, and earn very low incomes. Spanish is spoken in most of the homes and the children come to school knowing very little English. The language used in the home is mainly aimed at controlling behavior rather than exploring, describing, or instructing; and the children are generally deficient even in their native tongue. Families are hard-pressed to meet immediate needs, and the present takes priority over the future. The children receive little encouragement to complete tasks, and too much emphasis on values of cooperation and patience often leads to a passive attitude which later interferes with their success in school. As a result of the lack of early stimulation and their language deficiency, a large percentage of Mexican-American children in Texas fail the first grade--some estimates are as high as 80 percent. School often becomes a frustrating experience for them, and they develop a negative attitude toward education. The goal of the Bilingual Early Childhood Program is to prepare these children for school by providing them with activities which compensate for their home environment. At

first all instruction is in Spanish in order to develop the children's ability in their primary language; then English is systematically introduced, using familiar content and concepts. By the time they enter the first grade these children can communicate in both English and Spanish.

The major characteristics of the Bilingual Early Childhood Program are:

- A high degree of adult-child contact
- Neatness and order
- The use of language as a tool of thought
- Competitiveness and demands for high achievement
- Long-range goals and orientation to the future

SPONSORED BY THE SOUTHWEST EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY

The Bilingual Early Childhood Program is part of the Early Childhood Education Program of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, a regional laboratory located in Austin, Texas, which develops materials and methods for use with disadvantaged and culturally different children. The curriculum for the Early

Childhood Program was the product of a joint effort by the Good Samaritan Center, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the lab. In 1965 the Good Samaritan Center, a neighborhood social service center in a Mexican-American neighborhood of San Antonio, received a 5-year grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to develop a preschool program designed to meet the needs of children of Mexican descent. In 1968 the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory entered into a joint funding agreement to support the development of a written 3-year sequential curriculum for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds based on the work at the Good Samaritan Center. In 1969-70 the Early Childhood Program was first used in public schools, and in 1970-71 it is being pilot tested at eight sites in Texas and Arizona with almost 1,000 children, including urban Mexican-Americans, migrant Mexican-Americans, disadvantaged blacks, and Indians. The curriculum is being refined and modified to meet the needs of each of these target populations, and a 1-year program is also being developed for kindergarten use.

MODEL CITIES FUNDS SUPPORT THE PROGRAM

The Edgewood Independent School District first used the Bilingual Early Childhood Program in 1969-70. This district serves a Mexican-American community in San Antonio. Almost all the

students are from low-income Mexican-American families. This neighborhood is a Model Cities area and is using part of the funds to support classes for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds. In 1970-71 the district is operating classes for approximately 400 children, providing them with the background for school and improving their self-concepts.

STUDENTS ROTATE ACTIVITIES IN SMALL GROUPS

Classes are held in an elementary school and in a newly renovated building connected to the school. To provide the children with opportunities to interact with adults, each class has 20 students, one teacher, and one teacher aide. Since the curriculum is sequenced in difficulty, there are separate classes for each age group. Within the class children are divided into three groups on the basis of abilities. For part of each day the groups cycle through three activities--instruction by the teacher, instruction by the aide, and independent activities. Typical activities during the day include a language lesson; a thinking and reasoning lesson; visual, auditory, and motor activities; and enrichment experiences, such as art or music activities.

BILINGUAL STAFF

All teachers and aides are proficient in both English and Spanish. They work with the children from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and spend from 2:30 to 3:45 p.m. planning and evaluating. Teachers must have completed 90 college course hours and be working toward certification in early childhood education. The aides, drawn from the neighborhood, are required to have a high school education. Over half are involved in the Office of Education Career Opportunities Program; most of the others are mothers. Aides assume an active part in the classroom instruction of students, although such activities as formal English language lessons and problem solving are handled solely by the teachers. Men are well represented on the staff, with three male teachers and several male aides. A supervisor, who is also bilingual, works closely with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory and provides preservice and inservice training for teachers and aides.

CURRICULUM BASED ON BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

Teachers are supplied with a detailed curriculum guide which outlines a sequence of behavioral objectives and procedures for classroom activities to meet these objectives. The curriculum is divided into weekly units dealing with such content areas as food, clothing, animals, or body awareness. Certain concepts are reinforced throughout each unit by applying the same concept in

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different contexts. The units include lessons in five major areas: visual skills, auditory skills, motor skills, language skills, and reasoning and problem solving. All activities are designed to interest and involve the student, requiring some action on his part.

In each lesson the teacher is given a behavioral objective, such as: "Given a set of blocks of different sizes, shapes, and colors, the child will classify them according to shape with 90 percent accuracy," or "When asked by the teacher 'What is this?' the child will answer 'This is a table/book/chair,' depending upon the object being held." Behavioral objectives are a powerful teaching tool because they explicitly state desired goals in terms of what the child should be able to do and provide the teacher with a means of determining whether the children can meet these goals. The objectives in the curriculum have been systematically sequenced from lower level to higher level skills to encourage the child to steadily develop his capabilities. The teacher using this curriculum must first observe the child to determine his level of ability and then match this with an activity which will challenge but not frustrate him. As a result the child can improve his skills and also develop confidence in his own ability to

master tasks. In addition, his attention span increases as he becomes involved with the activities appropriate for his level of development.

The units integrate sensory-motor, language, and reasoning activities. For example, in a unit on body awareness for 3-year-olds, visual activities include locating the parts of the body on a doll and completing body and face puzzles; auditory training includes a "roll the ball" game in which the child learns to recognize his own name and the names of the other children in the class; through "Simon Says" games and other motor activities a child learns to locate parts of his own body. During Spanish language lessons, children learn to identify themselves and others in a mirror and in photographs, and to label and identify the functions of facial parts.

Classroom performance tests have been developed for each unit to provide objective information about each child's level of performance. This information helps the teacher assign children to smaller groups based on ability level and to gear tasks to each child's ability.

Since the curriculum has been designed to reinforce certain concepts and because it progresses from simple to complex skills, teachers are expected to present the units sequentially using either English or Spanish. But the teacher is free to adapt the activities and materials to her own class and is responsible for planning one or two activities each day, such as a game, art or music experience, or story time.

SENSORY PERCEPTUAL SKILLS

The curriculum includes objectives in the area of visual, auditory, and motor skills, which provide a base for later intellectual growth. Visual skills activities are designed to aid the children both in visual perceptual development and concept formation. Typical activities include matching and sorting objects on the basis of shape, relating colors to objects in the room, and ordering objects according to size. More advanced activities include copying a pegboard design, finding the missing part of a picture, or matching felt letters with letters in print form.

Activities in the auditory area develop children's ability to comprehend language and develop skills in auditory localization, discrimination, perception of rhythm, sequencing, and memory. For example, in an activity which involves discriminating among

sounds, the child is given pictures of objects--such as a cat, feet, a shoe, or a girl--to sort into two groups--the pictures of words with a specific sound, such as *t*, into one group, and the remaining pictures into a second group. In a fun activity to develop good listening habits, the teacher tells the children to listen for a particular word as she reads a story. Each time the teacher says the word the children raise their hands. In another activity which develops auditory localization skills, children form a circle around a blindfolded child. One of the children rings a bell, and the child in the center crawls toward the source of the sound. Then another child takes his turn in the middle.

The motor skills training emphasizes body awareness, integration of vision with motor activities, and development of fine motor coordination. For body awareness, the children learn to name and locate the parts of the body. They learn the importance of the eyes as a steering mechanism through such activities as walking forward and back in a straight line and jumping to a target. Fine motor coordination is developed through experiences with toys and other concrete objects, chalkboard activities, and later with paper and pencils.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

The bilingual program builds on the children's abilities in the language used in their homes. For the 3-year-olds all instruction is in Spanish for the first half of the year. The teacher might mention the English names for objects, but does not insist that children use the English names. During this period the children's knowledge of Spanish is expanded as the teacher labels objects and actions in Spanish and encourages the children to talk in Spanish. Thus the children develop their language skills, learning to label concrete objects with words and to use speech to communicate. Halfway through the year the teacher begins daily structured English lessons, introducing in English the labels and concepts the children have already mastered in Spanish. To assure a systematic and integrated approach to the instruction of English, the curriculum defines objectives for vocabulary, sentence patterns, and syntactic structures for each lesson and provides detailed instructions for the teacher to follow in presenting the lesson.

The teacher works with small groups of children in the English lessons so she can provide corrective feedback for each child and adjust the pace to the needs of the group. The lessons are designed to appeal to small children and involve real objects, pictures, or actions by the children. In introducing a new English lesson the teacher makes a statement about an object, such as

"This is a chair," and has the student repeat it. Then she poses a question about the object, such as, "Is this a chair?" The children answer "yes" or "no" accordingly. The next step involves using statements to elicit responses from the children: "Show me the chair," "Point to the chair." Finally, a question such as "What is this?" is asked to elicit unprompted responses like, "This is a chair." At each stage the teacher first models the response she wants from the children, produces the response with them, has them respond as a group, and then has individual children produce the response. If the group has difficulty the teacher drops back to an earlier stage of the lesson for review.

As the children's language ability expands, the lessons involve increasingly complex sentence patterns and language concepts, and the teacher begins to use English informally throughout the day. Activities are planned to reinforce what the children have learned in the language lessons and to allow them to practice their new English skills. English is used in the classroom about 20 percent of the time during the first year, and gradually increased to 80 percent by the end of the third year.

REASONING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Sensory-motor and language development activities provide the foundation for teaching reasoning and problem solving. In reasoning and problem-solving lessons, introduced during the second year of the program, children are encouraged to describe objects, narrate events, generalize, explain relationships, and predict outcomes. Activities include asking the children to describe classroom objects such as scissors or crayons and to explain the work done by their fathers or other members of their families. In one lesson children are asked to generalize about what happens to vegetables when they are cooked for soup. Other activities include simple riddles and other question-and-answer games and the use of pictures for perceiving relationships and predicting outcomes.

NEAT AND ORDERLY CLASSROOMS

A neat, orderly classroom environment is an important part of the program--materials are carefully arranged and equipment on display at any one time is limited. The children learn to keep the classroom neat--to hang up their coats, to put away materials when they are finished with them, to wipe up spilled juice. Furniture is scaled to the size of the children; generally learning areas are separated by the furniture and small rugs.

The Language Skills Area is separated from other areas by a low bookcase and shelves. Here, while working with small groups in language lessons, the teacher can still keep an eye on the rest of the children.

In the Book Nook, books are attractively displayed and are within easy reach. More than one copy of the same book is included so that several children can look at it at the same time. This area usually has a table and chairs or a small rug so that three or four children can sit comfortably.

The Manipulative Skills Area is designed to encourage independent play. The child has access to neatly ordered puzzles, peg-boards, and other manipulatory equipment.

The Role Playing-Make Believe Area stimulates the children's imagination through the use of housekeeping equipment, telephone booths, tools, dolls, dressup clothes, or other materials.

The Construction Area is set up for independent or small group projects, with blocks of different sizes and other building materials.

The Creative Area allows the child to explore and create with paints, crayons, and other art materials.

The Science Area is a combination active work area and display section, which provides space for plants, animals, and objects of nature.

The Large Group Area is used when the entire group works together.

MATERIALS ARE ROTATED DURING THE YEAR

Materials and equipment are typical of those in most preschools. However, a limited number of materials are placed in the classroom at any one time so that the children will not be overwhelmed by too many distractions. Some materials are selected to help children learn concepts of color, size, shape, and number, and are self-correcting and suitable for independent play; others are included because they relate to the topic under study. For example, housekeeping equipment is used in a unit on food, and pictures of people in different occupations are placed around the room during a unit on jobs. Rotating equipment during the year also adds variety and interest. Commercial materials and equipment are supplemented by instructional materials supplied by the

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, including pictures, puzzles, transparencies, audio- and videotapes, and manipulative objects.

The teacher demonstrates how to use each piece of equipment, introducing the vocabulary to be used with it. When she feels that the children understand how to use the equipment, she places it on the shelf within easy reach so that they can work with it during independent work time.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily class routine allows children opportunities to work and play, to interact with adults and peers, and to work both in groups and independently. The more difficult lessons are presented early in the day when children and teachers are fresh. Early in the school year the children are acquainted with the daily routine, the classroom, and with each other. Gradually the activities are expanded and time periods extended as the child becomes comfortable in his new surroundings.

CHILDREN DEVELOP PRIDE IN THEMSELVES

A major goal of the Early Childhood Program is for the children to develop pride in themselves and their heritage. The curriculum

is designed to provide opportunities for children to experience success; the classroom environment is structured to develop the qualities that lead to success, such as persistence, attention, and curiosity. As the children master increasingly complex learning activities, they develop confidence and feelings of self-worth. Since the ability to speak Spanish is viewed as an asset to be preserved and reinforced while they also learn English, they feel accepted and proud of their background.

PROMISING RESULTS

The effectiveness of a program must be measured by changes in the children who participate. Results of a study comparing the intellectual growth of 3-year-old students in the Early Childhood Program with two comparable groups of children, one in a parent involvement program and the other in a traditional nursery program at day care centers, showed that the children in the Early Childhood Program made significant gains in IQ scores, while the children in the comparison groups did not. All groups scored below national norms on all tests requiring language in the test administration, but on tests that did not require language they scored approximately at national norms.

The findings of this study demonstrate that these children are handicapped by their deficiency in language skills and that a program designed to meet their needs can accelerate their intellectual growth. The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory will continue to cooperate with the Edgewood Independent School District and other school districts to refine and evaluate the Bilingual Early Childhood Program.

For more information on this program contact:

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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MODEL PROGRAMS--Childhood Education

This is one in a series of 34 descriptive booklets on childhood education programs prepared for the White House Conference on Children, December 1970. Following is a list of the programs and their locations:

The Day Nursery Assn. of Cleveland, Ohio
Neighborhood House Child Care Services, Seattle, Wash.
Behavior Analysis Model of a Follow Through Program, Oraibi, Ariz.
Cross-Cultural Family Center, San Francisco, Calif.
NRO Migrant Child Development Center, Pasco, Wash.
Bilingual Early Childhood Program, San Antonio, Tex.
Santa Monica Children's Centers, Calif.
Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, Salt Lake City, Utah
Dubnoff School for Educational Therapy, North Hollywood, Calif.
Demonstration Nursery Center for Infants and Toddlers, Greensboro, N.C.
Responsive Environment Model of a Follow Through Program, Goldsboro, N.C.
Center for Early Development and Education, Little Rock, Ark.
DOVACK, Monticello, Fla.
Perceptual Development Center Program, Natchez, Miss.
Appalachia Preschool Education Program, Charleston, W. Va.
Foster Grandparent Program, Nashville, Tenn.
Hartford Early Childhood Program, Conn.
Philadelphia Teacher Center, Pa.
Cognitively Oriented Curriculum, Ypsilanti, Mich.
Mothers' Training Program, Urbana, Ill.
The Micro-Social Preschool Learning System, Vineland, N.J.
Project PLAN, Parkersburg, W. Va.
Interdependent Learner Model of a Follow Through Program, New York, N.Y.
San Jose Police Youth Protection Unit, Calif.
Model Observation Kindergarten, Amherst, Mass.
Boston Public Schools Learning Laboratories, Mass.
Martin Luther King Family Center, Chicago, Ill.
Behavior Principles Structural Model of a Follow Through Program, Dayton, Ohio
University of Hawaii Preschool Language Curriculum, Honolulu, Hawaii
Springfield Avenue Community School, Newark, N.J.
Corrective Reading Program, Wichita, Kans.
New Schools Exchange, Santa Barbara, Calif.
Tacoma Public Schools Early Childhood Program, Wash.
Community Cooperative Nursery School, Menlo Park, Calif.

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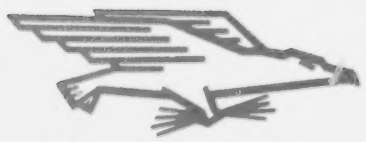

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